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ABSTRACT

Catholic schools in the United States today are very different from the Catholic schools that first opened in the 18th and 19th centuries. This handbook is a call to action for all Catholic elementary schools, inviting and challenging all Catholic educators to plan for the future. The volume is the first in a series of handbooks containing essays on the future of Catholic elementary schools, asking, "What will Catholic elementary schools in the next ten years be like?" Contents include the following: (1) "Introduction" (Robert J. Kealey, Ed.D.); (2) "The Future of Catholic Schools" (Sister Barbara Davis, SC, M.A.T.M.); (3) "Looking to the Future with Eyes on the Past" (Jim Brennan, Ed.D.); (4) "A Dream That Cannot Be Deferred" (Elena Casariego Hines, M.A.); (5) "Build It Now" (Lorraine Hurley, M.Ed.); (6) "St. Mary's School" (Sister Mary Ann Governal, OSF, Ed.D.); (7) "Reflections on Catholic Schools for the 21st Century" (Patricia Cantieri, M.Ed.); (8) "Translating from One Century to the Next" (Sister Joseph Spring, SCC, M.A.); and (9) "Creating a School for the 21st Century" (Sister Antoinette Dudek, OSF, Ed.D.). (LMI)

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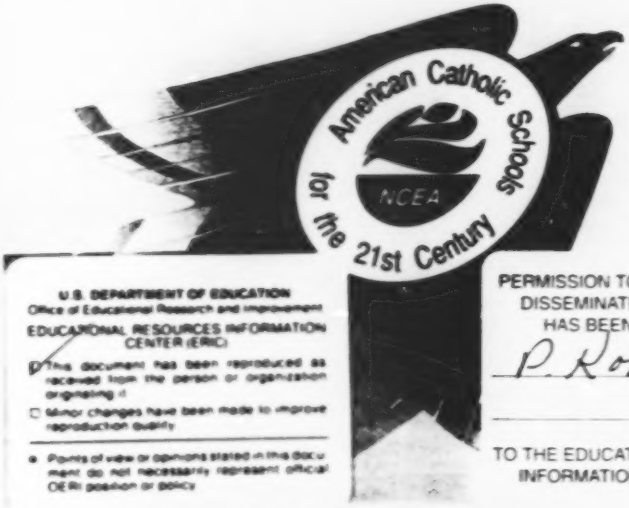
American Catholic Schools for the 21st Century:

Reflections on the Future of American Catholic Elementary Schools

Volume 1



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Robert J. Kealey, Ed.D., Editor

Department of Elementary Schools
National Catholic Educational Association

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American Catholic Schools for the 21st Century:

Reflections on the Future of American Catholic Elementary Schools

Volume 1

Robert J. Kealey, Ed.D., Editor
Executive Director
Department of Elementary Schools

National Catholic Educational Association
Washington, D.C.

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DEDICATION

The members of the National Catholic Educational Association Department of Elementary Schools Executive Committee dedicate this work to their colleague

Sister Mary Ann Governal, OSF, Ed.D.

whom God called to himself on March 19, 1996.

Sister Mary Ann was a driving force behind the National Congress on Catholic Schools for the 21st Century. She ensured that every school in the Archdiocese of St. Louis became an American Catholic School for the 21st Century. While serving as president of the NCEA Department of Elementary Schools, she planted the seed for this project.

May her zeal for excellent American Catholic schools fire all of us to continue to perfect quality Catholic schools.

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PREFACE

In a few short years the new millennium will be upon us. Although nothing spectacular happens when we move from one century to the next, this event comes to most of us only once in a lifetime, so we can make it as special as we wish. The time is appropriate, therefore, to look into the next century and try to determine what it will hold. This is especially true as far as education is concerned.

American Catholic schools of today have their roots in the schools that the early missionaries started after Europeans landed on these shores in the 17th century. Tentative buds were seen in many areas in the 18th century. Through the work of countless religious sisters, priests, and brothers, Catholic schools became full-blown in the 19th century. The 20th century saw additional blooming, some withering, but more importantly, the planting of seeds for the future growth of Catholic schools.

This book is a call to action for all Catholic elementary schools. It challenges and invites all Catholic educators to plan for the future. This planning process was initiated in 1990 when the process for the National Congress on Catholic Schools for the 21st Century began. In the fall of 1991, 250 representatives of all aspects of the Catholic community met in Washington, D.C., and set directions for the future. The following year, each member of the National Catholic Educational Association was invited to "light new fires" and become an American Catholic School for the 21st Century. This past spring, at the NCEA convention in Philadelphia, members of Congress '96 reaffirmed the directions set by the National Congress five years earlier.

The reader should not expect that the following essays will draw a detailed picture of what Catholic elementary schools will look like several years from now. The following reflections are all very different and approach the future from several different perspectives. The members of the NCEA Department of Elementary Schools Executive Committee who wrote these reflections wanted to start a conversation among themselves and all their membership. This conversation focuses on the changes that need to take place to move our schools into the new age. The members of the committee are certain that only by planning for the future can we create the future that we desire.

You will notice that this book is volume one. Additional volumes are anticipated over the next several years. The committee wants to share these conversations with the membership; therefore, it invites you, the reader, to become a writer and share your thoughts with the membership. Each member is invited to submit a short reflection (no more than 2,000 words) on how she or he sees the future of Catholic elementary schools. As essays are received, future volumes will be published. Hopefully, these will stimulate all our thinking about the future of our schools. Please participate in this dialogue by sharing your vision with the rest of the membership.

Feast of All Saints, 1996

Kieran Hartigan, RSM
President

Robert J. Kealey, Ed.D.
Executive Director

Department of Elementary Schools
National Catholic Educational Association

Robert J. Kealey, Ed.D.
Executive Director, Department of Elementary Schools
National Catholic Educational Association
Washington, DC

The Setting

Think back to the days when you were a student in an elementary school and compare your experiences in that school with your experiences today as an educator or parent of a child in a Catholic elementary school. Some of us have the advantage of being able to think back farther than others. I entered a Catholic elementary school over 50 years ago. All my teachers were religious sisters, and I was never in a class of less than 50 students. The desks were in straight rows and screwed securely to the floor. We used the Cathedral Basic Readers, the Baltimore Catechism, De La Salle Arithmetic Books, Emmanuel Spellers, Voyages in English, and the Faith and Freedom History Books. The technological revolution of the day was the switch from the straight pen to the fountain pen. The discussion over the switch from the fountain pen to the ball point pen would come in my early teaching days. My experiences were almost identical to those of the three million students in Catholic elementary schools, and my experiences were not radically different from my parents' experiences or those of my grandparents. Very little had changed from the time the first Catholic schools opened in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Today things are very different. Few students have a priest or religious for a teacher. Class size is generally around 20 students. Most classrooms have learning centers around the sides of the room, and in the middle are small clusters of desks. The textbooks are all secular. The religion book reflects the teaching of the Catholic Church and is presented in a manner appropriate to the age of the students. Computers, telephone modems, and VCRs are only a few of the technological innovations in the school.

Most of the above changes have come about only within the last few decades. The pace of change has increased rapidly, however, and every indication points to its continued acceleration. Consider, for example, all the changes that have taken place in the last 15 years since computers first found their way into the classroom.

The Goals

This volume is the first in a series of small books containing essays on the future of Catholic elementary schools. Notice that we are not asking, "Will there be Catholic elementary schools?"; rather, we are asking, "What will Catholic elementary schools in the next ten years be like?" In developing the multiyear program of American Catholic Schools for the 21st Century, we have several goals.

First, the program seeks to facilitate a discussion, a national conversation, on the future of our schools. This discussion has its roots in the National Congress on Catholic Schools for the 21st Century. The discussion continues as we look in greater detail at the programs in our Catholic elementary schools. Much can be learned by sharing insights with one another in the Catholic elementary school community; that is why all of us need to be involved in this discussion.

Second, the program seeks to encourage each Catholic elementary school in the country to plan for the future. Many schools already do this as part of their regular evaluation process. This program seeks to make these plans living documents that are reviewed, refined, and revised on a regular basis. The fast pace of our times forces us to acknowledge that plans made yesterday may not be valid for today. Planning is an ongoing process. Planning involves the whole school community in seeking a way to create a future. Planning is one of the highest manifestations of the Christian virtue of hope.

Third, the program seeks to bring about change in all 7,000 Catholic elementary/middle schools. Discussion leads to concrete plans, plans lead to action. Many people find change very difficult, especially those who have not been involved in the change process. American Catholic Schools for the 21st Century seeks to involve everyone in the change process.

Finally, the program seeks to ensure that students in Catholic elementary schools will learn more, learn more deeply, and be more firmly rooted in their acceptance of the teachings of Jesus as presented by his Catholic Church. In all our discussions, all our planning, all our actions, we must always remember the students and how better to assist them.

The Context

There are eight principles that form the parameters of our discussion that we must not forget as we design and implement our plans for the future. To present this set of principles, I have chosen to use the model of the eight principles that form the basis for the Christian life.

1. Blessed are the students whose schools have a clear Catholic identity. As I have studied the history of American Catholic education, I have noticed that the mission of the Catholic school has not changed essentially since the first schools opened on this continent. All of the documents talk about integrating the Christian life with the academic life. People are a totality, and we cannot separate one part of their lives from the rest of their life. In a July 30, 1996, letter to the *Wall Street Journal*, Albert Shanker, the president of the American Federation of Teachers, complained about an earlier article that praised Catholic schools on New York's upper West Side. He concluded by saying that what was special about Catholic schools was not that they were "Catholic" but their order, discipline, and solid academic standards. Mr. Shanker again missed the whole point. It is precisely because the Catholic schools are Catholic that they have order, discipline, and solid academic standards.

Much has been written about the Catholic identity of the Catholic school. Three points are the foundation of this identity. First, Catholics, through the redemptive act of Jesus and their baptism, are brothers and sisters in Christ. Each person has a unique relationship to each other. In the Catholic school, this is lived out each day. Educators, staff, students, and parents recognize the presence of Christ in themselves and in the person of all the people they meet. This recognition leads them to act with great respect toward each other and to be of service to one another. The Catholic school is the concrete manifestation that people from diverse backgrounds can live in peace and harmony as brothers and sisters.

A second essential aspect of the school's Catholic identity is that teachers teach students the life and teaching of Jesus as presented by the Catholic Church with conviction and without apology. This is *the* curriculum of the Catholic school. It is the reason for its existence. No one doubts that doing this in today's culture is very diffi-

cult because so much of our culture presents ideas that are so contrary to the teaching of Jesus. The Catholic school and its community are the concrete reminder to the world of what Jesus taught. They are the visible challenge to the entire neighborhood to live the Christian message. They are the constant reminder that there are more important things than the transitory allures of today's society. Students are required by their baptism and by what is taught them in the Catholic school to bring Christ with them to the world by their example. Only if they have a deep knowledge of Jesus and what he taught can they do this.

The third pillar upon which the Catholic identity of the school rests is the integration of Christian virtues into all aspects of the school. In the religious studies class, students learn the principles of the Catholic religion. In the social studies class, students see the application of these principles to daily life, and in the school lunchroom, they apply them. Religion is not something that a person puts on and takes off according to the circumstances. It is an integral part of the total person. In a Catholic School for the 21st Century, students see others modeling the Christian life and they are challenged by their teachers to perform acts of charity.

Whatever the Catholic school of the future looks like, it can never depart from its essential Catholic identity.

2. Blessed are the students whose teachers acknowledge that all students can learn. In reading the life of Jesus, you notice his concern for the most forgotten in the society of his time. Jesus went out of his way to help the sick, young children, those with mental problems, foreigners, and those deemed unworthy by society. Each of these people had a special place in his heart. He made no distinction among them and believed that all could be saved. When people failed, he forgave them and helped them succeed the next time.

The success of Catholic schools, especially in the early part of this century, has been phenomenal. One of the reasons why so many poor immigrant children succeeded was the determination of the religious sisters who taught them. Every student knew that "Sister" believed that he/she could pass and that he/she was expected to pass.

We must keep this conviction alive in the future. All students can learn; some may learn more quickly, others may learn in a dif-

ferent manner. Our confidence in the students gives them confidence in themselves.

3. Blessed are the students who receive a quality education. The hallmark of Catholic schools is the quality of education that they provide. This is one of the major reasons why over 12 percent of our students are non-Catholics. Their parents recognize the superior education that Catholic schools provide when compared with the local government-controlled schools. American Catholic Schools for the 21st Century must enhance the quality of the education they provide.

American Catholic elementary schools have always emphasized the basics. They must continue to do this. When students leave Catholic schools, they must be grounded in the essential skills of learning and have a fundamental knowledge of religious studies, language arts, history, geography, science, literature, mathematics, music, art, and a foreign language.

For Catholic school educators, providing a quality education based on the needs of the students and on the requirements of the time is a justice issue. Catholic schools must always be reviewing their programs to see that they are meeting these two criteria.

4. Blessed are the students who have a supportive and challenging learning environment. The foundation for this beatitude is the strong belief that students are the center of the school. Everything that happens in the school revolves around the students. The litmus test for any activity is the answer to the question, "How will this benefit the students?"

Teachers support students in their learning by providing quality lessons, by attending to their individual needs, by giving additional instruction, by encouraging them. Students support one another by demonstrating respectful conduct in school, modeling the Christian life, and living the vocation of a student. Because students are the center of the school, all its activities tend to support them.

The school's activities go beyond support, however, and move to challenging the students. Students will not grow academically if they are not challenged. Although they need to be motivated, they cannot be so greatly pressured that they will fail. The challenge given to students merely calls them to stretch themselves beyond

where they are now. Students are challenged also in the area of spiritual development. The demands put on older students are very different from those put on younger students. Challenge is what enables students to grow, to be educated, to deepen their spiritual commitment, and to become risk-takers.

5. Blessed are the students who are educated in all areas of life. We human beings are a totality—we cannot separate ourselves into individual parts. We do not give up our spiritual identity when undertaking intellectual endeavors, our logical thinking skills when engaging in athletic activities, or our emotions when making decisions. All of our capabilities impact us at all times. A school cannot say, therefore, that it will only educate part of a person or neglect certain areas. Catholic schools have always acknowledged this unity. In the future, our schools must continue to recognize the multifaceted student whom research on multiple intelligences has documented. Perhaps in the future, Catholic schools may need to give greater emphasis to areas such as the bodily-kinesthetic or musical intelligence that was somewhat neglected in the past.

6. Blessed are the students when the school is a community of learners. Our belief in the teachings of Jesus and our recognition of Christ's presence within everyone is the foundation on which our Catholic schools build their community. An important aspect of this community is that it is also a community of learners. Although most attention is given to the student-learners, teachers, administrators, and staff recognize that they also are learners. We have all heard many graduation talks in which the speaker referred to graduation as a commencement, a beginning. Learning is a lifelong process. Once we have discovered one fact, a host of additional questions spring to our mind seeking answers.

The adults in the school must model for the student-learners. This learning is not limited to the techniques of educating but includes content also. Some of the most successful social studies and science teachers are those who assign research projects to their students and to themselves. Students and teachers share their new learnings. Teachers describe for students the processes that they went through to acquire a new understanding. Teachers thank students for giving them new insights into a topic. Students are in awe when teachers give book reports on books they recently read.

In this decade in which more information is generated in one day than was generated previously in a lifetime, teachers must be comfortable in saying, "I don't know, but let me find out." Students should regularly see teachers making use of the library/media/information center.

This sense of everyone being an explorer of God's world electrifies the learning situation. Learning is something that is prized. Learning takes the mysteries out of life and reveals new mysteries seeking solutions. An American Catholic School for the 21st Century is not a bank in which teachers give out information in various amounts; rather, the Catholic school of the next century is like a seashore where a wave brings in water, shells, stones, and minerals and the next wave washes them out. Things are constantly changing at the school—new patterns are treasured, it remains ever open to new conditions, and it continues to serve a unifying purpose.

7. Blessed are the students when schools use multiple resources. A few decades ago, the stone tablet was the tool of learning, yesterday it was the book, today it is the computer, and tomorrow some new device will help us to learn. Research has clearly shown that we all learn in different ways. The American Catholic School for the 21st Century, therefore, must be a resource center. The teacher-learners are its greatest resource because they guide the student-learners to the many resources of the school.

Technology may change the dynamics of the classroom. Whole-class instruction may become briefer and briefer, with just enough time to whet students' appetites before they go off to satisfy their cravings. They may go to different parts of the classroom or to the school's information center or, to communicate with someone half a world away, they may use their computer textbook/workbooks.

Technology may change the length of the school day, week, and year. Students may come to school for a few hours or days and then return home or to learning centers to continue their investigations. Electronic communication may become the primary mode of communication between some teachers and students.

Will teachers be replaced by machines? No. All students need the challenge of another student, especially a teacher-learner. All students need the modeling of the teacher-learner. Some students need the interpersonal contact with the teacher-learner more than other students do.

The challenge for the American Catholic School of the 21st Century is to plan wisely what human and material resources will be needed to capture the learning desire of the students.

8. Blessed are the students whose parents play a major role in their learning. Catholic school educators have always acknowledged that parents are the primary educators of their children. They are first in terms of providing the most lasting impression, first chronologically, first in knowing their children's needs, first in terms of quantity of instruction given(verbal, social, spiritual, physical, academic, etc.). This primacy continues throughout life. What students learn in the first few years of life has a more lasting impression than what will be learned later in life.

Catholic schools have always prided themselves on a close connection between home and school. In future decades this connection needs to continue and grow. Technology will force teacher-learners and parent-learners to collaborate more closely for the good of the child.

The Beginning

Most essays end with a conclusion. This one ends with a beginning. The purpose of this and the following essays is to stimulate your thinking about the future of Catholic elementary school education. Thus, we are at a beginning. We invite you to share your ideas with the entire Catholic community. Please become part of this national community by reflecting on the contents of these pages, developing your own ideas, and sharing your views with the other educators in the American Catholic Schools for the 21st Century community.

Sister Barbara Davis, SC, M.A.T.M.
Principal, St. Mary's School
Shelby, OH

As we move into the 21st century, I believe our Catholic schools will better be termed "learning centers." I see that the population we serve will no longer be restricted to children and adolescents.

Some parishes/schools have already started day-care centers. They are staffed beyond the normal operating hours of the school and serve children before and after school hours. This ministry can be an extension of the school providing a "safe" place for parents to leave their children while they are at work. I believe the number of such centers in our parishes will grow dramatically in the coming years. Offering this service is and will certainly continue to be a great "recruiting" tool for our preschool classes.

Traditionally, our school buildings have been open for six or seven hours a day, exclusive of times the gymnasium is being used for sports. I believe that this schedule will change as our buildings become centers for learning for adults as well as students.

Although an increasing number of homes have access to computer technology, including the use of Internet and other international communications systems, there is still a significant number of homes that do not. Opening our doors beyond the normal school hours will allow adults and children to make use of the technology in our buildings and will allow students more opportunities to share with parents what they have been learning.

I see technology playing an ever-increasing role in instruction. Staff development will have to be a high priority; otherwise, the computer equipment in our classrooms will become just another item stuck in the corner. Teachers must know how to integrate the information available into their courses of study.

Year-round schooling, though not unique to Catholic education, will continue to grow in popularity. As we look at this possibility, I believe we also need to address the issues of the length of the school year and the length of the school day. Again, these are not issues that are uniquely Catholic. I believe our schools, however, could be pacesetters in these areas, going beyond the minimum requirements of our particular state departments of education.

No matter what changes occur in instructional methods, technology, use of facilities, or length of the school day or year, our ministry remains the same. We must remain rooted in the Gospel message of Jesus and respond to his command to "teach all nations." We must also continue to cherish our role as partners with parents as we assist in the religious formation of the students entrusted to us.

Jim Brennan, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Diocese of San Jose

The American Catholic school in the 21st century—what will it look like? This is a staggering and somewhat overwhelming question. So many changes have occurred in recent years, how can it be possible to imagine what the Catholic school will look like for the next century? When confronted with questions such as this, it seems best to identify from where we have come before suggesting what the future might hold. Merely to fantasize about what technology will be present or how specific grade-level curriculum will be taught seems a bit shortsighted.

The American Catholic school has seen steady growth in numbers in recent years and widely accepted success in terms of student achievement. Reports have substantiated the Catholic school's success, especially with minority and disadvantaged students.

Although this has been a time of growth and resurgence, it has also been a most challenging time for those involved. Most visible are the faculty and administrative positions that are more and more being occupied by lay people as opposed to the clergy and religious who have served in those roles for so many years. The reduction in numbers of those in the priesthood or religious life has evidenced a consistent decrease in the number of those who are available for service to the Catholic school. It is with the well-trained and dedicated Catholic school teachers, whether lay or religious, that much of the hope for tomorrow is placed.

Classroom and curricular structures have begun to change. We have seen a movement from the teacher-centered classroom to the child-centered curriculum facilitated by the teacher in a cooperative learning environment. The attainment of student expectations and outcomes is now replacing the mere mastery of facts. Students are now being challenged to make application of knowledge in a variety of situations that demand the use of higher-order thinking skills.

The funding of Catholic schools has evolved and continues to change. Moving from a time when it provided schooling that was virtually free because of the donated services of the priests and religious, the Catholic school is now a high-budget organization which

must seek its funding from a variety of sources, not the least of which is the tuition paid by the parents. Fund-raising and development activities are now part of the life of most Catholic school communities.

We know that Catholic schools can survive change because they have survived some pretty significant changes in recent years. We know they have been effective at many things, including the cognitive development of their students. We know they can meet fiscal challenges with good leadership.

It seems to me that the underlying factor that has kept the Catholic school together and successful over the years is its understanding of its purpose and mission. To the degree we have been able to do this, we have been able to keep the Catholic school open and flourishing. This has not always been easy, by any means. After Vatican II, there was a time when there was wholesale closing of schools, even when there was an abundance of children to be served. When we have been successful, it has been when we have understood and proclaimed our purpose with pride and resoluteness. When we have failed to do this, I believe, we have experienced significant difficulties.

What, then, is our purpose? It is what the bishops told us in their pastoral letter *To Teach as Jesus Did*, in which they challenged us to spread the word of Jesus Christ, to build community, and to be of service. We can address the bishops' mandate utilizing the context of faith development in which to promote the cognitive growth of the child.

Although the bishops' mandate has been a point of reference for us, in many ways it was not new or radically different from what was ordered prior to Vatican II. The mandate lent itself to support and encourage this mission of the Church, but it was a message similar to the one that was received loud and clear from the old Baltimore Catechism, if we were listening. In the catechism, we were told that we were to devote ourselves to know God (spread the message), to love him (build community), and to serve him (be of service).

The purpose of American Catholic schools, therefore, should be crystal clear to all of us. It seems to me that the degree to which we have kept our focus clear on this message has dictated our level of success.

What will the American Catholic school in the 21st century look like? I don't know. I don't believe any of us can purport that we know with any degree of certainty. We know from experience that there will be change. As I look at my last appointment as principal, there were changes that we needed to make that in no way could have been predicted. Coming into the school in 1986, I didn't see a single computer outside of the Apple II lab. Nine years later, every classroom had two Macintosh computers in it. The lab was upgraded to Macintosh; the office was completely computerized; and there was a local area network with a computerized student information database. The change to the utilization of this technology was important to the life of the school. It was only with a community of Catholic school teachers working together to build a strong Catholic educational community that this could be implemented.

Whether the change we will be faced with in the 21st century comes from technology, pedagogy, or other intervening forces at the time is unimportant. What is important is that we have a clear understanding of what we are about and assertively provide the leadership to bring this to our schools.

The American Catholic school in the 21st century will, I pray, be one that obviously has as its mission to spread the word of God, build community, and be of service. The realization of this mission will rely on good, sound leadership. This leadership will be a significant factor that will enable us to move into the next century with a clear Catholic vision. A good Catholic school principal can provide the leadership to manage change in many areas and still keep our focus on the mission of Catholic education. If there is anything we should be doing to prepare for this, I believe it is to put together processes by which we can insure the training of leaders for our schools, so that the message of the Catholic school can be alive and vibrant in each school community.

Elena Casariego Hines, M.A.
Principal, St. Rita School
Dallas, TX

"Hold fast to dreams for if dreams die
life is a broken-winged bird which cannot fly."

—Langston Hughes

Thus Langston Hughes, a great American poet, described life without dreams, and those who are in the business of schooling and education should well heed his words. Since life without dreams is a "broken-winged bird which cannot fly," we educators should have and nurture dreams for the future of our students and our schools. Unless we do, life would become as described in Hughes's second metaphor, "a field barren with snow." Our responsibility is not just to maintain the status quo in our schools but to look forward to the future with great vision and, in some way, to be instrumental in building that vision.

What will Catholic schools for the 21st century look like? Will they maintain the status quo or will they be pioneers in education? This essay will attempt to paint, not as effectively as Langston Hughes, one educator's dream for Catholic schools.

Catholic schools historically have been known for doing an outstanding job with what might be considered the "bare essentials" financially and for producing an excellent product that is well-versed in the basics, the four R's—the traditional *reading, 'riting, 'rithmetic, and religion*. The future, however, requires more than those very valuable basics, and Catholic schools must be able to prepare their students for it without sacrificing what has worked so well in the past. This modern, technological world presents a myriad of new and complex moral challenges; therefore, Catholic schools must continue to stress religious values and be at the forefront of moral education.

Besides facing these challenges, Catholic schools must look at their mission statements and how they teach the traditional Gospel values. They must look deep in their hearts to determine if they have indeed practiced what was preached and if they have been Catholic in the true sense of the word. In the past, these institutions have reached out to minorities and the underprivileged and have

been considerably more successful in educating them than their public-school counterparts. Once again, this has been achieved without spending too much extra money or without adding special programs. What about those minority students they have failed to educate because the resources weren't there and they just "couldn't meet the needs of these students"? This minority to which I refer is not one identified by race or ethnic origin; it is the large number of students with learning differences, special needs, and physical and mental challenges. What is the Catholic school of the 21st century going to do for them? Will it continue to ignore them for the most part as in the past, or will its primary mission become the education of *all* children who seek to be educated in our school communities?

If Catholic school educators are to be true to the Gospel message and to the mission of teaching as Jesus did, they cannot ignore this large group of students who cannot avail themselves of a Catholic school education because very few schools will accept them. Those schools that do admit them often have to ask some of these students to leave because they are not able to meet the students' educational needs or because they have to "consider the good of the whole."

So how will this school of the 21st century be different from its predecessors? First, this school will be committed to educating children with learning differences, different gifts, and challenging conditions. This means that all students who desire an education in our schools will be accepted and educated in the best way possible for their needs in the least restrictive environment. It means that gifted, exceptional children will be able to develop to their fullest potential as well as dyslexic children, slow learners, and average students. Is this beginning to sound somewhat like inclusion– that dreaded buzz word that has caused such controversy in educational circles? Absolutely. Jesus was inclusive, not exclusive. Scripture tells us that he came for the needy and the sick, the pariahs of society, and that "fairly well" describes the way some of our excluded students have felt.

In order to accomplish this goal, the leaders of these schools must be able to provide the necessary resources, financial as well as human. Counselors, special-education consultants, teachers for the gifted and talented, teaching assistants, and other personnel must be made available. It is an impossible dream to think that teachers

can take on these added duties and demands without the proper support personnel.

This new school would be designed with students' learning styles in mind. The classrooms would include enough space for individual as well as small- and large-group work. The building itself would have extra rooms of varying sizes to accommodate special programs or projects on an as-needed basis. Class sizes would be smaller so that those children that would benefit from a smaller class environment and a lower student-teacher ratio would not have to go to those private schools that do provide these services or to the public schools.

Modern technology must be an integral part of each room, for without it, students' needs will not be satisfactorily met. Those children who need laptop computers to help with their writing problems would have them available, just as those who need tape recorders for recording teachers' explanations or lectures would have them. Furthermore, technology would continue to be fundamental for providing support for teachers and for properly preparing students to meet the challenges of society. A computerized library and a computer network are essential for accomplishing this. Students must have every access to the outside world via technology. Imagine what vistas would be opened to them! Administrators and teachers must be well acquainted with technology, familiar with the theories of multiple intelligences and with learning and teaching styles, and active practitioners of these in their daily teaching. Inservice and continuing education for teachers are key elements to successful teaching. No program, no matter how much money is spent on equipment and facilities, can be effective without well-trained teachers. Our schools of the future would be committed to educating teachers as well as students.

Parent and community education would also be an integral part of the school. The school building would be alive with some form of teaching for most of the day. Parenting classes and adult education would be included in the school's overall curriculum goals. These will require creative administration, a great deal of cooperation in planning and implementation, and an openness of heart and mind.

This educator knows that educating for the future is an expensive dream and that in the past it has been difficult, if not impossible, for Catholic schools to remain open, much less to keep up with modern technology and other innovations. It would seem ludicrous, therefore, to even consider adding more resources and more programs, unless the financial base for supporting the school increases. If this dream is to become a reality, we cannot allow our vision of the past or the present to limit our future. We must be creative thinkers in the area of finances. There are ways of raising the necessary funds, whether it is through private foundations and donors or through firm and unrelenting effort in political action to obtain from the government the funding we need and to which we are entitled as taxpayers. It is the duty of those who cherish this dream for the future to come up with the means for its implementation. We must hold fast to our dreams as we plan the means to make them come true.

Lorraine Hurley, M.Ed.
Principal, St. Francis School
Naugatuck, CT

Will it be a square, triangle, star, or hexagon? The thought of being an architect with the challenge of building the ideal Catholic school for the next millennium is overwhelming. This unique opportunity was presented to me during a recent National Catholic Educational Association meeting. I felt commissioned to embark on this visionary enterprise. My view of a Catholic school in the year 2000 began to take shape mentally, and I now present to you my dream.

Ideally, the building would reflect the mission and philosophy of Catholic education. *Educator* comes from the Latin *educare*, which means "to lead out." Thus, the Catholic school that educates will lead out from place to place, and this is my visual perception of *educare*.

The Leadership Environment

Christian leadership will encourage concern and compassion through communication while utilizing the technology that the new millennium will provide. The new era of the age of information will become a guide to the practical application that leadership will need in its implementation of guidelines, policies, and procedures that flow from this environment. The equality of leadership will be reflected in the triangular appearance of the physical structure. As the Trinity dogma of our faith ascertains the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to be one and the same, so too the administration, priest-director, and faculty will reflect a triangular equality. Each will serve and assist one another, reach to one another's corner of expertise while serving the needs of the school community.

Even though the leadership environment will appear to be self-contained, it will not be. You will be able to open the door, any door, and walk the pathway to others and to the center.

The Arts Environment

This structure will be built as a star for stars. Each student will visit this area to reach out and develop his or her gift of creativity. The inner self of random learning can be highlighted through exposure to the arts. This star-like environment will need to be encour-

aged because the balance between technology and the arts can become a 90/10 instead of a 50/50 if safeguards are not implemented.

Music, whether it is vocal or instrumental, is a marvelous opportunity to praise the Lord with sound. Art, such as sculptures and paintings, can become a source of inspiration to the budding artist and others. The performing arts will stretch the imagination and eventually extend to the school body and provide a deep appreciation for these forms. The art environment will prepare stars to guide us through our Catholicity, as did the three kings when they followed the star. Once again, the path will lead to the heart as well as circumvent the entire student body.

The Curriculum Environment

When the students reach this hexagon environment, all the academics will be addressed here—religion, math and science, language arts, computer education, foreign languages, and special services.

Considering the above academics through the 20th-century window, there is a premise that perhaps these six areas will change when viewed through 21st-century eyes. If so, then adaptation will occur ideally whenever special services are considered within the framework of the curriculum. I envision the students with specific needs will be intermingled and sharing the curriculum environment. I do not see children who need special services isolated and sent away from the classroom to learn, but actively engaged within the community of learners.

The teachers, educators will talk the talk of learning and walk the walk of education, not only in theory but in a practical way. They will walk from their area to all the adjoining areas in this ideal learning academia.

The Physical Environment

Growth and development are sequential, so the area of physical exercise will offer organized activities and sports. Physical education will include all the health aspects and incorporate sports that foster growth and development at age-appropriate levels. The perfect rectangle or square will contain activities at basic levels of physical exertion while stretching the physical aspect in a blend of community spirit.

Organized sports will be encouraged—no tryouts. All who are able will participate. Name the sport, and the opportunity to be engaged in it will be available to the 21st-century student-athlete. Realistically, this environment will invite all the students to attend and participate.

The Spiritual Center

The Catholicity of the school of the 21st century will provide a center that offers the whole person an opportunity to be in contact with God. The center will be an area to worship, witness, hear the word, and envision the world to be served. It will be the heart that pounds the beat of education, where leaders, administrators, faculty, and students engage in one faith.

The circular motion of this area will welcome everyone equally. I envision the beginning of the day, its continuance, and the sunset of the day to occur here.

Sister Mary Ann Governal, OSF, Ed.D.
Associate Superintendent of Schools
Archdiocese of St. Louis, MO*

"It takes the whole parish, diocese and city to raise a child."

St. Mary's School is a Catholic learning community that is an integral part of the parish and city. The school is a coalition of educators, parents, students, parishioners, priests, and community members who are continuously consulted on the school's mission, goals, and activities.

As a Catholic learning community, St. Mary's School has some marked differences from a decade ago. For example, the school operates year-round, with facilities open 12 to 16 hours a day, six days a week. There are flexible schedules for both learners and teachers, and learning occurs in many places across the community. Family services and adult learning are integral to the school. The students are multiage grouped, with the same group of teachers being with the same students for two or three years. Computers and telecommunications are also an integral part of learning experiences.

The students at St. Mary's School have many opportunities for interactive, thematic learning. The following vignette is an example.

> *The 11-, 12- and 13-year-olds are exploring the theme of frontiers. During the morning session, they discuss the theme of frontiers, concluding with individual decisions as to which learning cluster each will join. The cluster topics include frontiers in space, frontiers under the sea, and frontiers in medicine.*
>
> *Thirty students choose to explore frontiers in medicine. Living in a community rich in health care facilities, the students choose sites for off-campus studies. The teachers tell the students that they must divide into subgroups: math, science and technology, social studies, language arts, fine arts, and physical health. The students develop questions that link the theme of frontiers of medicine with their chosen subgroup study area. Students design ways to answer their questions, carry out their project design, and submit a final report to the entire group.*

* Sister Mary Ann died in a tragic automobile accident shortly after writing this essay.

The following morning, the frontiers in medicine group spends the day touring a children's hospital. The students participate in guided tours that give the group an overview of the facility.

The next day, each child contributes to discussions with the various subgroups, recording on paper the insights articulated by the students. The subgroups then focus on a specific topic. The math group is interested in studying the economics of health care. The social studies group decides to link its studies with the math group, analyzing the ways in which health care costs are shared by people of other countries. The science and technology group decides to study the use of computers in surgery. During the visit the previous day, this group met a girl from Guatemala who was to have her face reshaped to give her a chin. The other groups develop projects in a similar way, with topics ranging from a study of hospital food service and dietetics to the use of art in therapies to help patients recover. All groups use computers and telecommunications in executing their projects.

Although interdisciplinary exploration is frequent during the school year, careful attention is given to providing all students with a strong foundation in each discipline, especially in the area of religion, which has been and will always be the hallmark quality of a Catholic school.

St. Mary's School also has many similarities to a decade ago. For example, the climate at the school is distinctly Catholic. This unique climate is expressed and experienced through daily prayers, vibrant weekly liturgies, and many sacramental opportunities. Catholic signs and symbols are displayed throughout the school. Students, teachers, and families have numerous opportunities to offer service in the school and in the community. Decision making is collaborative, and parents are volunteers throughout the day and evening in the school.

St. Mary's School is a learning community, which strives to meet the needs of the Catholic Church, the students, and the community at large for the 21st century.

Patricia Cantieri, M.Ed.
Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Diocese of Palm Beach, FL

The population increases daily in Florida—by the thousands. Farmland and wetlands are targeted for housing developments, shopping centers, and golf courses. Experts predict that early in the 21st century many counties in Florida will face water shortages.

Floridians will become explorers once again in our human history, as will many throughout this great land of ours. These people will be—

- exploring the sea for water and for space to live, as they did in Key West many years ago.
- exploring the land for options under the surface, as have many already living in houses carved into the side of a hill or a mountain.
- exploring outer space for ways to live and communicate. How many flights into outer space have there already been?

Our search, in the present automated world, may expand inward and outward for survival, food, water, space.

Schools for the 21st century will need to plan for and respond to the needs of a new people. Catholic schools will lead the search for meaning, for peace and quiet—the treasures within.

Sister Joseph Spring, SCC, M.A.
Principal, St. Mary School
Hackettstown, NJ

Looking into the future, I see the Catholic schools of the next millennium being quite different from the schools of today—in all areas, except that which truly makes the institution Catholic, namely, the Catholic identity of the school.

In the 1990s, for Catholic schools to survive and thrive they have had to be startlingly different. This difference lay in their Catholic identity, with the following suppositions: The school's philosophy is based on Gospel values; the teachers are hired only if they espouse Christian principles; and the students are guided and formed in the way of Jesus.

Despite rapidly changing technology, a plethora of scientific discoveries, the need for new job skills, and new discoveries in styles of student learning, the constant remaining is the Catholic identity of the school. Catholic schools will still espouse the fourfold, interlocking dimensions of Catholic education—message, community, worship, and service.

How will this identity manifest itself in the 21st century? As one walks in the school door (or downloads a program being taught a hundred miles away), readily visible will be physical signs that yes, this is a Catholic school. The name of the school as usual will be telling—it probably will be named after a saint (St. Agnes, St. Mary, etc.), an event in Christianity (Incarnation, Assumption), or an outstanding Christian (Bishop McDevitt, Cardinal Spellman)—and that name will be emblazoned on the walls. The unique mark of our faith, the crucifix, will be visible throughout the school, reminding students that Jesus is the reason for the school, the unseen but ever-present teacher in its classes, the model for its faculty, and the inspiration for its students.

A school is built not merely of brick and mortar, but of academic and religious values. These will be transmitted to each student through the person of the Catholic school teacher. This person will be truly committed to the transmission of faith and culture, not so much by the words he or she speaks but by the manner in which he or she lives. It is the Catholic school teacher who will be the role model for the Catholic school student. Approximately one third of

the child's waking hours will be spent in this teacher's company. This educator will have nearly as much influence on the student as will the parents—an awesome (in the literal sense of the word) responsibility! Christa McAuliffe, teacher-turned-astronaut, left us a powerful legacy in her statement, "I teach, I touch a future." No one will be more powerful than the Catholic school teacher.

What of the Catholic school curriculum for the 21st century? It, too, will continue to be infused with Gospel values. The religion class, obviously, will be the place in which doctrine and dogma are taught, but it will be through the "secular" subjects that Christian life skills will be made real.

The reading and literature classes will be replete with literary pieces reflecting the multicultural society in which we live. An appreciation for the aesthetic beauty of the language, the cadence of the poetry, the rich imagery used by the author will be shared with the students. That will be truly "holy," a movement of the soul.

The math class will teach a sense of order in the universe, with numbers and patterns as a gift from God. Monetary transactions will be addressed not only mathematically, but with a sense of justice, especially in a society with injustice nearly a way of life.

Science, the natural forum for the proof of God's existence, will provide the setting for discussion of God as Creator, our duties as stewards of that creation, and our obligation to pass the world along to the coming generations in better shape than we found it.

Social studies will be taught with Gospel values as the thread running throughout human history. Students will learn that no event happened by chance. Human rights, as given by God, will continue to be understood as gifts to be safeguarded. Students will also learn that crimes against humanity, such as war and genocide, are to be abhorred and never repeated.

Language classes will keep the Catholic school student connected with the global village in which he or she lives. In order to relate with one's fellow man, one will need to communicate, not only electronically but also verbally.

Technology will enable the Christian to communicate with the world. In order to use the technology properly, a set of ethical principles will be imparted to the student. The student will be made to

understand the principles of justice governing software as well as hardware.

The examples are varied and endless. The common ground will be the Christianity permeating the teachings.

What of the students of the 21st century? How will they differ from the students of today? Obviously, they will be exposed to new methods of learning, new methods of interacting, new workplaces to be filled. In a great sense, life will provide more leisure for them than it did for their parents and their grandparents. With the increase in leisure, however, comes the added responsibility to use that leisure time in a productive and fulfilling manner.

The students will realize that they are part not only of the global village but of the family of God, where all persons are brothers and sisters and all have responsibility toward one another. As John Dunne said so long ago, "No man (or woman, in the language of the 20th century) is an island." In the later words of *Gaudiem et Spes*, "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too, are the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the followers of Christ. For nothing truly human fails to raise an echo in their hearts, for theirs is a community composed of men [and women]."

Caring in the Catholic school will begin in each classroom and extend to the world. If our Catholic schools do not enable our students to become caring Christians, they will have failed in their mission.

Finally, the Catholic school of the 21st century should continue to be a worshipping community, whether that worship takes place in the building called the church or in the community which is the church. God will continue to be the center of the school.

So, then, the Catholic identity of the school in the 21st century will be more a translation of all that is truly Catholic and Christian from one century to the next. A true sign of what makes the school Catholic will be the ability to change and adapt, to use what is best, to "make holy" what is secular. That was the way of Jesus.

Sister Antoinette Dudek, OSF, Ed.D.
Assistant Executive Director,
Department of Elementary Schools
National Catholic Educational Association
Washington, DC

The year is 2001. St. Francis of Assisi Education Center has completed the last phase of its long-term planning process. After much discussion, prayerful reflection, and assenting and dissenting opinions, it was decided that for the new school to be viable in the shadows of the central city in Detroit, Michigan, it would be essential to redesign the church to include a small chapel that would be open throughout the school day to teachers and students for quiet and reflection. The chapel will also serve to unify the school as an educational and catechetical center. This is what the new St. Francis will look like.

The worship space (chapel) will be in the center of the property; above it will be a large media center and below it will be a large gym. Jutting out from ten different connections (rays) will be a before- and after-care center; structures for the preschool and kindergarten units and for grades 1-2, 3-5, and 6-8; a cafeteria; a meeting room; an area with offices for the principal, school nurse, speech and language therapist, and guidance counselor; a tutorial center for children with learning difficulties; and an art and music section.

Four separate playground areas—at the north, south, east, and west sections of the school campus—will be furnished with age-appropriate equipment for the preschool and kindergarten, primary-grade level, intermediate-grade level, and middle-school level.

The mission of St. Francis Education Center will be to foster learning in its different modalities in a Catholic atmosphere that values the individuality and uniqueness of each child. The faculty and staff will perceive their mission at St. Francis to mirror love of one's self, others, and the earth. It will be essential for the faculty, staff, and students to be knowledgeable about the mission of Catholic education as it is experienced in the Franciscan tradition.

The curriculum at St. Francis Education Center, while adhering to age-appropriate standards, will offer challenges to all students. The world of the 21st century will open many doors to children. It will be the role of the teacher to help young children learn

the basics of unlocking the various doors, while older students will learn the fine art of creating new door frames that are in sync with the current world as well as that of the future.

Students at St. Francis will be challenged to learn the basics of technology consonant with their developmental learning levels. For example, young children will learn that the computer is not the only technological piece of equipment in the classroom. They will be taught the very basics of technology through the use of record/tape/CD players, language masters, slide and overhead projectors, the telephone, the public-address system, TV sets, and smaller electronic equipment such as calculators and hand-held games.

Integral to teaching technology and content subjects will be an emphasis on a life skill that cuts across all age groups—conflict resolution or peacemaking skills. Although this area has always been important, as we move into the 21st century, with so much more emphasis on diversity issues, conflict resolution will assume even greater importance.

The wonderful selling point about St. Francis Education Center will be that everybody will learn together. Yes, the teachers will all be duly degreed and certified, but that won't preclude their ability to learn from the students. What will make this school an exciting place to learn will be that respect and reverence for the individual will be critical to the total philosophy of the school. St. Francis will not be a namby-pamby place where children withdraw and do as they please. It will be a vibrant center where adult learners and children come together to create a better world in which to learn. It will be a place where the arts are revered and the artists are encouraged to develop their talents through mentors who will come to the center biweekly. These adult mentors will be interested in helping children unleash their potential. They will understand the temperament of an artist and so assist teachers with helpful insights, too. They will come not to offer excuses on behalf of the children they mentor but to open children of all ages to the wonderful world of the arts.

St. Francis of Assisi Education Center will be open 18 hours a day, five days a week from September to June. Children may attend programs from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. every day. After 6:00 in the evening, the center will remain open for another six hours for

adults only. At this time, classes in parenting, English as a second language, technology, reading, math, religion, psychology, music, and art will be taught. The gym will remain open for basketball, volleyball, racquetball, swimming, weight training, dance, and aerobics.

St. Francis of Assisi Education Center will not be in an affluent area of the city. It will work well, however, because of partnerships between the business community and the church. Other related agencies will help the center with financial or personnel support. That will make a difference in the success of the programs. All people, Catholic or not, who have committed time or talent to St. Francis have a vested interest in its children as a viable future for the city of Detroit.

I think St. Francis would be proud of the way in which this church in Detroit rebuilt itself.

Helen Petropoulos, M.A.
Principal, Ste. Genevieve du Bois School
St. Louis, MO

Several years ago, the National Catholic Educational Association selected a future theme for the year—"Catholic Schools Touch the Future!" In the last ten years, the association has devoted a number of issues of its publications to the subject of the challenges and choices facing Catholic schools in the future. Recently, the NCEA journal, *Momentum* (October/November 1995), focused on the technology issue as we proceed "into the 21st century."

With the approach of the third millennium, all sectors of society are beginning to seriously think about the future. As Catholic educators, we are gradually progressing beyond words and thought to action, as our schools begin to understand how the use of technological tools can indeed enhance our school programs and aid us in carrying out our mission.

As we approach the 21st century and begin utilizing all the technological tools available to us, we are simultaneously beginning to understand that with great technological advances come great responsibility. We are responsible for addressing not just the issues of accessibility, equality, and copyright laws but also the subject of how new technologies can potentially change our way of life. I believe three challenges face us as Catholic educators:

- To provide opportunities for our school communities to envision our preferred future
- To exercise moral leadership in a world of changing values, confused goals and new technological tools
- To plan quality educational programs that focus on skills and competencies for future living

A General Plan of Action

We must begin to develop present and future attitudes. A general plan of action in response to the demands of the future would include the following goals to mobilize Catholic educators:

- To involve the entire school community in dialogue and inservice that encourage visioning of our preferred future and defining Christian attitudes and values necessary for responsible future living
- To renew and expand our definition of basic skills to include specific future living skills demanded in the technologically sophisticated world of the future
- To assess present programs in the light of skills needed for future living and to devise a specific plan for incorporating those skills into the curriculum

A Specific Plan of Action

Educators will be key people in preparing children to meet the challenges of the future. Our Catholic schools must become creative forces in the next stage of human history. We must provide not only the skills and competencies needed for future living but also the moral values and attitudes that will enable our students to live happily and responsibly in a world of changing values and confused goals.

As a Catholic school principal, I would implement the goals and imperatives for the future by involving the total school community in a school-wide effort to vision what we want our preferred future to be. Parents would be involved through home and school meetings and special discussion groups. These meetings would provide information and opportunities to discuss predictions, realities, alternatives, and Christian responses. Speakers would provide information and guidance for parenting for the future. Utilizing all these resources, parents would arrive at their vision of the preferred future for "St. Anywhere" School.

Teachers would be involved through dialogue and inservice programs in the same type of visioning process as the parents would undergo. Teachers would also participate in workshops and activities that identify teaching/learning strategies needed for educating for the future. Focus among teachers would be on identifying skills necessary for the future and the development of alternative teaching strategies that will enable students to become self-directed learners.

Students would be involved through a monthly focus on specific skills needed for future living. These skills would involve the entire school community, with special emphasis on home and school activities.

The following pages present a sample program that might be sent out to parents and teachers at the beginning of the school year to set the tone for the "Future Focus at St. Anywhere School." Each month, an attempt is made to center on a specific skill and how parents and teachers might help to develop that particular skill. I have used these ideas in implementing a futures theme at two schools. The theme would be enhanced by providing a bibliography of reading materials that would be helpful to teachers, parents, and students and by alerting parents and teachers to speakers and programs that address future-living skills.

SEPTEMBER: How to learn

Advances in technology and information retrieval systems will make it simple for children to collect accurate information, but children of the future will need skills in how to learn. They will need to be taught to make use of the information, to research, to draw conclusions, to make decisions, to ask questions and to find creative solutions to problems.

As our children begin this new school year, we need to encourage them to take greater responsibility for their own learning and becoming self-directed learners. We must find ways to enable our children to use thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving skills. Above all, we must help our children to take pride in their work and show them that learning is rewarding and ongoing.

OCTOBER: How to celebrate

Children of the future will need to know how to be creative, to think about alternative ways of doing things and to find alternative solutions to problems.

During the month of October, when children's imaginations are filled with mythical characters and monsters they will become on Halloween, encourage them to dream and imagine. The favorite question of a child is "What if?" Provide opportunities this month for creative problem-solving and creative expression. Provide problem situations for children to solve. Stimulate creativity and encourage sharing.

NOVEMBER: How to value

Children of the future will need to be convinced of their values. They will need help to be protected from the materialistic values of television and modern society. We need to help our children to understand that wealth and power are not the essence of happiness. We must teach our children to value people over things, quality over quantity, and cooperation over competition.

As we celebrate Thanksgiving this month, we should help our children value those gifts for which there is no price—life, beauty, faith, family.

DECEMBER: How to relate

Future predictions about family life are depressing. Rising divorce statistics and the increase of people needing psychological services verify the importance of teaching our children how to relate. We must find opportunities to help our children communicate and cooperate. Living with others demands that we take time to listen to others' point of view, to give in sometimes, and to admit when we are wrong.

As we celebrate Christmas with our children, we need to help them to understand the importance of sharing and celebrating with family and friends. Focus this month on being sensitive to and understanding of others. Children of the future will need to be able to empathize with the feelings and needs of others, to learn tolerance and acceptance of others, and to resolve conflicts and become peacemakers.

JANUARY: How to celebrate life

As Christians, we must prepare our children for a world in which there is a steady decline in the reverence for life. We are developing frightening powers over life and death without developing simultaneous reverence for the sacredness of life.

We must be teachers of life! Take time to discuss life issues in your home. Help your children to become truly caring, courageous persons who will defend the life of the unborn, the handicapped, and the aged. Help your children to respect life by being positive in relating with others, by avoiding put-downs, by resolving conflict without violence, and by reaching out to the elderly, the lonely, and the poor through family visits to the local nursing home or food pantry for the needy.

FEBRUARY: How to discover

Children of the future will be dealing with new technological developments in computers, automation, energy, electronics, and communications. They will need to develop a scientific attitude toward the world around them that includes searching for the truth and questioning conclusions.

Pose problems and encourage your children to estimate and hypothesize what might happen. Take advantage of opportunities to discover by visiting science museums or centers, by encouraging children to enter the annual science fair.

MARCH: How to choose

Children of the future will need to be confident. They will need to know how to have control over choices and create changes in the world that will benefit themselves and others.

Even the youngest children must have opportunities to make choices. Children must experience choices with emphasis on responsibility if they are to develop self-discipline.

Encourage children to become involved in the student council and student involvement organizations such as scouting, which will develop leadership and decision-making skills. Give your children opportunities to make age-appropriate choices.

APRIL: How to consume and share

Natural resources are becoming scarce. Our children must learn how to conserve, recycle, and appreciate and value our world. Help children to see that our world is interdependent and that how we consume and produce has implications for others. Help children to understand their Christian responsibility to use the world's goods with respect and generosity.

Use this month in which we celebrate Earth Day to help your children focus on environmental problems and endangered animals. Help your children understand advertising techniques so that they will be informed consumers.

MAY: How to pray

If the predictions about the future become reality, our children will need faith, hope, courage, and trust in God to avoid depression

and despair. During this month when new life blossoms, help our children to recall God's abiding presence in our lives and in our world. Teach them to praise God for the beauties of creation, to thank him for his myriad gifts, to call upon him for help, and to develop a prayerful, reflective spirit that looks beyond material things to spiritual realities.

Take time to pray together and witness to the power of faith and prayer in facing the future.

JUNE: How to use leisure time

As we know, many children simply make TV their one leisure-time activity. Schools need to help students learn to enjoy leisure-time experiences that are productive for personal growth and development. Futurists say that leisure time will be more available as work hours, job requirements, and lifestyles change.

We must help our children to enjoy reading for pleasure, the arts, crafts projects, music, games, clubs, nature activities, exercise, meditation and relaxation techniques, and volunteering to help the poor, sick, or elderly.

CONCLUSION

Now that you have completed reading this book, please reflect on what you have read here, what you have read in other sources, your experiences, and your best predictions. I do encourage you to share some exciting program that is happening in your school which might be replicated in other schools. Please share your thoughts on the future of American Catholic elementary schools for the 21st century with your colleagues in Catholic elementary school education.

You may wish to discuss the school in general or a particular aspect of the 21st-century Catholic elementary school. Please limit your essay to no more than 2,000 words.

Send your essay (if you have WordPerfect 5.1, please send your essay on a disk) to:

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